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Bellaire welcoming new businesses

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BELMONT County's Port Authority was back in Bellaire on Thursday for the regular village council meeting, along with the owners of two businesses to make announcements.

During the meeting, Port Authority Director Larry Merry introduced the businesses, including one that will become the newest tenant to Commerce Park, ISI Systems Inc., which currently operates out of a facility on North Guernsey Street, Bellaire.

ISI Systems Inc. has been in business for seven years and was founded by William Wallace, the company's CEO, and Christine Wallace, the company's president.

Joining Christine Wallace at Thursday's meeting was ISI Systems Inc. General Manager Rob Kernik.

"I'd like to take this opportunity, my husband and I, to thank Mayor Vince DiFabrizio and all of you (council) for this great opportunity to be apart of the community," Wallace said. "We are very excited about having our own building that will be on two acres at 2 Commerce Park Way."

Along with 6,000 square feet for the manufacturing aspects of the business' new building, another 1,000 square feet will be used to house the administrative offices of ISI Systems Inc.

According to Kernik, the business does all types of metal and specialty fabrications, including shelving systems, catwalks, fire escapes, handrails and conveyors, with products geared toward factories and industries.

ISI Systems currently employs 15 people, but that number of employees has been as high as 70, Kernik said. One of the projects the company worked on was the construction of Cabela's Distribution Center in Ohio County.

Another business that could soon be calling Bellaire home is Lion Industries. That business is waiting on approval of a loan by the state of Ohio. If approved, Dave Humphrey, president of Lion Industries said he hopes to be moved his new facility at 5300 North Guernsey St. within a few months. The business is currently in operation near St. Clairsville but needs room to expand.

"We're putting a tremendous amount of money into this project, buying state-of-the-art equipment and want to be very competitive," Humphreys said.

During the meeting, council also approved an agreement that will give the business a 50 percent income tax credit should the business relocate to the village. According to village Solicitor Ed Sustersic, the tax credit could also help the business get the state funding.

According to Humphreys, he and his wife Audrey, started the company in 1995. They currently have 20 employees between their two businesses and hope to add "at least" 25 new jobs to Lion Industries as part of its possible expansion in Bellaire. His other business, American Cable, will remain near St. Clairsville.

"We're very excited about the opportunities to develop this and provide some good paying job with benefits for the Ohio Valley," Humphreys said.

The business does fabricating and stamping and has clients all over the United State and parts of Canada.

During the evening, council also passed another piece of legislation, giving the Belmont County Port Authority 2.619 acres at Commerce Park. According to Merry, there will be another business moving into business area, with more details to be announced later.

"The key to this success is everyone realizing the need to do something," said Merry. "I've said many times, government doesn't create jobs, but can create environments were they can be successful. That's what we are trying to do."

Also attending the announcement were Belmont County Commissioners Gordie Longshaw and Mark Thomas.

In other news, Councilman Troy Johnson announced that 500 surveys concerning possible projects for the village will be mailed out. Anyone who receives the survey is strongly encouraged to fill it out and return it.

Prior to adjourning, council met in executive session to discuss finances.

Not present for Thursday's meeting were Councilmen Rickie Parker and William Marinacci.

It was also announced there will be an ordinance committee meetings has been scheduled for Monday at 5 p.m.

The next regular Bellaire Vilalge Council meeting is scheduled for Feb. 21 at 6 p.m.

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